

Citizens Fair and Exposition or the annual Children's Christmas Party giving away thousands of dollars in toys to area children. The canned goods given for admission are distributed to local charities in time for Christmas delivery.

In conclusion, I want to express my admiration for those who have helped to maintain the hometown tradition since 1949. I wish KWRE in Warrenton, Missouri, all the best in their 50th anniversary celebration and hope they can continue to provide such wholesome, hometown coverage for east central Missouri for decades to come.

□ 1600

SUPPORT AMERICAN FARMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, as we proceed with our work on Budget 2000, I want to take this occasion to pose the following question: Are we doing everything we need to do to support our American farmers? That is a question we all need to seriously think about.

In 1998, the agriculture sector of the economy suffered through one of the worst years in American history. Drought and other weather conditions, coupled with extremely low prices, significantly affected many producers in my home State, Texas. Farm and ranch production values declined more than \$2.4 billion from 1997 in Texas. The resulting loss in agribusiness income is an \$8 billion blow to the State's overall economy, mostly to the small rural communities like I represent in the 15th Congressional District.

Nationally, from 1996 to 1997, net farm income dropped 6.8 percent from \$53.4 billion to \$49.8 billion. Economists forecast a 15.7 percent drop from \$197 billion to only \$42 billion in 1998. To say the least, these declines are dramatic.

While weather conditions will hopefully improve, the current price situation for crops and livestock remains bleak. Virtually every commodity has continuing low prices, with little prospect for improvement.

When the Congress passed the 1996 Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act, certain other issues were to be addressed. Those included: Passage of fast track negotiating authority, relief of government regulatory burdens, and the repeal of capital gains taxes and death taxes. In the 3 years since the passage of the FAIR Act, those promises have not been kept. I mention all of this because I feel it is important to constantly be mindful of how vital agriculture is to our country. When disasters occur, yes, action is taken to respond to them, but what we saw last year was too little, too late.

That is not a philosophy to which I subscribe.

Mr. Speaker, much more needs to be done for America's farmers, and the time to do it is now, as we are now working on the budget. Let us help provide a safe and secure future for our farmers. Agriculture is a vital part of our economic fiber in our country, and the men and women who comprise America's farming community are important to our Nation's character. It is our responsibility to make sure that they survive and that they have an opportunity to prosper. Let us provide an environment in which they can.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close my remarks by tossing out two thoughts for consideration. They evidence why we absolutely need to do the right thing. In the next 30 years, the world's population will increase by 2.5 billion and the demand for food will double. Who is going to feed them? Everybody eats.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS PORTEND GREAT COST TO ANGELENOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I wear on my lapel just above the pin signifying that this is the 106th Congress a pair of black horn-rimmed glasses representing the memory of the late great Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. Goldwater brought a simple, plain-spoken candor to public life, and, Mr. Speaker, I think it was typified by his straightforward declaration that as an American, people should have the right to join a union but they should likewise have the right not to join a union if they so desire. And mindful of some perilous trends in public policy, I rise on this occasion this afternoon.

California is the next-door neighbor of Arizona, and the Los Angeles Unified School District is contemplating a move that portends great cost to the citizens of Los Angeles and portends a trend that should be fought by all means at the Federal level. I speak of project labor agreements. This is what is being proposed in Los Angeles. This comes to school construction. "The contractor recognizes the council and its affiliated unions as the exclusive bargaining representatives for the employees engaged in project work covered by this agreement."

Mr. Speaker, in the LA Daily News on the editorial page, it is noted that "even a school board member who often sides with the teachers union can't turn a blind eye to this outrage." What is outrageous? Well, quite simply this fact, Mr. Speaker: The estimates are that this plan could increase construction costs by 10 to 15 percent in the district.

Now, lest you think this is only something that Los Angelenos should be concerned about, Mr. Speaker, I would commend to your attention something this House once saw in April of 1998, the Vice President of the United States, he who last week claimed that he was the father of the Internet, he who infamously claimed 2 years ago that there was no controlling legal authority given the outrage of alleged campaign donations to the Clinton-Gore team from foreign governments including the People's Republic of China, well, this selfsame Vice President announced that the Clinton-Gore team would aggressively pursue linking Federal projects to union construction firms.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that everyone should have the right to apply to do work and if a union shop is the bidder that is accepted based on its quality of work, that is well and good. But here is the problem with union-only agreements as the Vice President promised to Boss Sweeney and others: Not only is the blatant payoff, Mr. Speaker, but in fact it will end up costing the American taxpayer across the width and breadth of our annual budget an additional \$5 billion a year.

Now, mindful of the florid rhetoric and the feel-good attitude that the President brings when he steps to this podium annually to offer his State of the Union message and mindful that sadly his rhetoric does not always square to reality, I would invite the President and the Vice President and others who claim that project work, or union-only agreements, would somehow be beneficial to step up and defend spending an additional \$5 billion of taxpayers money. Because, you see, Mr. Speaker, there is a better way, indeed to use the President's term, there is a third way, but that would involve truth and merit rewards.

And again I say, lest there are those who misunderstand, if it is a union shop that steps forward with the best ability to do the work, well, then God bless them and they should be awarded a contract on their merits. But to restrict or to claim that this government or indeed any other governmental entity will deal only with union shops is to circumvent freedom of choice, freedom of association and fiscal responsibility. For to paraphrase Goldwater and perhaps change his phraseology, I believe that union firms have a right to bid on a contract but I also believe that open shop firms should have that same right. And if an open shop can do the work better, then they should be selected.

FOREIGN OIL REVERSAL ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.